

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 7072

Joint Petition of Conversent Communications of)
Vermont, LLC, and PayPhone, LLC, for)
Approval of a Transfer of Control)

Order entered: 6/30/2005

I. INTRODUCTION

On April 19, 2005, Conversent Communications of Vermont, LLC ("CCV") and PayPhone, LLC ("PayPhone") (jointly referred to as the "Petitioners"), filed a Telecommunications Merger and/or Acquisition Request for Approval Form ("Application") requesting authority from the Vermont Public Service Board ("Board"), pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 107, for approval of a transfer of control resulting from a change in the ownership structure of their parent corporation.

On June 6, 2005, the Vermont Department of Public Service ("Department") filed a letter with the Board recommending the Board approve the transfer of control because the proposed transaction would not detrimentally impact Vermont consumers or cause them inconvenience or confusion. The Department further recommended the Board approve the Petition without further investigation or hearing.

The Board has reviewed the petition and the accompanying documents and agrees that approval should be granted without hearing.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

Based upon the Application, Petition and accompanying documents, we hereby make the following findings of fact.

1. NEVD of Vermont, LLC, was issued a Certificate of Public Good ("CPG") to provide telecommunications services in Vermont on February 16, 1999, in Docket No. 6160. The CPG was amended to reflect a name change to Conversent Communications of Vermont, LLC, on

May 11, 2000, in Docket No. 6380. CCV is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Conversent Communications, Inc. Application at 1-2.

2. PayPhone was issued CPG No. 443 to provide telecommunications in Vermont on October 27, 1998. PayPhone is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Conversent Communications, Inc. Application at 1-2.

3. Pursuant to a proposed stock transaction, approximately 11% of the shares of Conversent Communications, Inc., will be transferred from one existing shareholder to another. Both CCV and PayPhone will remain wholly-owned subsidiaries of Conversent Communications, Inc. Application at 2.

4. Following the transaction, both CTC and PayPhone will continue to operate under their respective current names and tariffs. Accordingly, the transfer will not cause any inconvenience for Vermont consumers. Application at 3-4.

5. The proposed transaction will promote the public interest by allowing Petitioners to strengthen their competitive position, thereby enhancing Petitioners' ability to compete in the telecommunications market and ensuring the continued existence of telecommunications competition in Vermont. Application at 4; Docket No 7041, February 23, 2005.

III. DISCUSSION

The proposed transaction requires approval by the Board under 30 V.S.A § 107. This statute conditions approval of a proposed transfer of control upon findings that the transfer of control will promote the public good (30 V.S.A § 107). This standard is met in this case.

Under 30 V.S.A. § 107(a), "[n]o company shall directly or indirectly acquire a controlling interest in any company subject to the jurisdiction of the [Board] . . . without the approval of the [Board]." "Controlling interest" is defined as "ten percent or more of the outstanding voting securities of a company" or such other interest as the Board determines "to constitute the means to direct or cause the direction of the management or policies of a company." 30 V.S.A. § 107(c)(1).¹ In order to approve the acquisition of such a controlling interest, the Board must

1. The statute also provides that "[t]he presumption that ten percent or more of the outstanding voting securities of a company constitutes a controlling interest may be rebutted by a company under procedures established by the board by rule." 30 V.S.A. § 107(c)(1).

first find that it will "promote the public good." 30 V.S.A. § 107(b).

After reviewing the petition, we conclude that 30 V.S.A. § 107 applies because the holding company level transaction contemplated will result in the transfer of controlling interest of the parent company of CCV and PayPhone. We further conclude that the transfer of control will not affect the services that the Petitioners currently provide to customers in Vermont. The Petitioners will continue to offer service at the same rates, terms and conditions. The proposed transaction will also allow the companies to strengthen their competitive position, which may, in turn, result in enhanced competition among providers of telecommunications services in Vermont. The resulting transfer of control, therefore, will promote the public good. For all of these reasons, we conclude that the proposed transaction meets the standards set forth in 30 V.S.A. § 107 and should be approved.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The transfer of control of CCV and PayPhone should be approved because the transaction will promote the public good of the State of Vermont and will not result in obstructing or preventing competition. 30 V.S.A. § 107(b).

V. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED by the Public Service Board of the State of Vermont that:

1. The transfer of control of Conversent Communications of Vermont, LLC, and PayPhone, LLC, will promote the public good and, therefore, is approved.
2. Petitioners shall file a letter notifying the Board of the completion of the transaction within one week of such completion.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont, this 30th day of June, 2005.

<u>s/James Volz</u>)	
)	PUBLIC SERVICE
)	
<u>s/David C. Coen</u>)	BOARD
)	
)	OF VERMONT
<u>s/John D. Burke</u>)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: June 30, 2005

Attest: s/Susan M. Hudson
Clerk of the Board

NOTICE TO READERS: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Board (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: Clerk@psb.state.vt.us).

Appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Vermont must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within thirty days. Appeal will not stay the effect of this Order, absent further Order by this Board or appropriate action by the Supreme Court of Vermont. Motions for reconsideration or stay, if any, must be filed with the Clerk of the Board within ten days of the date of this decision and order.